2021

PAYROLL BENCHMARKING REPORT

Annual study examining trends, efficiency and costs of payroll in Australia







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Introduction

Since 2013 the Payroll Benchmarking exercise has grown to such a proportion that still surprises us today. As we are not data scientists that deliver in this certain niche, we made the decision this year to engage a suitably qualified professional to analyse, interpret and manage the data.

This report aims to provide payroll professionals and employers the opportunity to analyse their own benchmarks in comparison to industry standards, with a view to improving the efficiency and productivity of their payroll operation.

A message from our CEO, Tracy Angwin

Many innovations have improved the payroll industry since I joined it 26 years ago. But there is one thing that remains the same.

"Payroll is underestimated by everyone who does not work in it"

It's partly because it's seen as a bit of a dark art. Our colleagues aren't really sure what we do, they generally don't notice payroll, when it goes to plan. But it becomes very visible when it doesn't.

I know that the most forward-thinking organisations are looking at their data regularly and regularly reporting to executive management and boards of directors, to provide assurance that their payroll operations limit risk and focus on efficiency and compliance.

This is why we have produced the 2021 Payroll Benchmarking Report. To help you ensure how your payroll operation stacks up and where improvements can be made.

All the best,

Tracy



Respondent overview

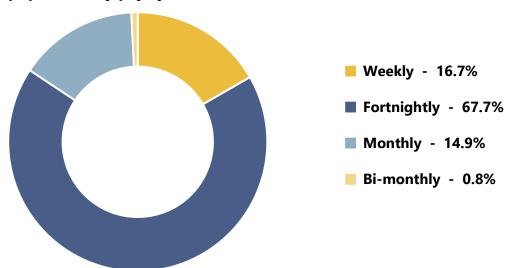
1,579 ORGANISATIONS
850,455 EMPLOYEES
23,909,936 PAYSLIPS ISSUED ANNUALLY

The 2021 Payroll Benchmarking report received responses from payroll professionals in 1,579 Australian organizations, who pay 850,455 employees, and produce almost 24 million payslips annually.

Pay Cycles

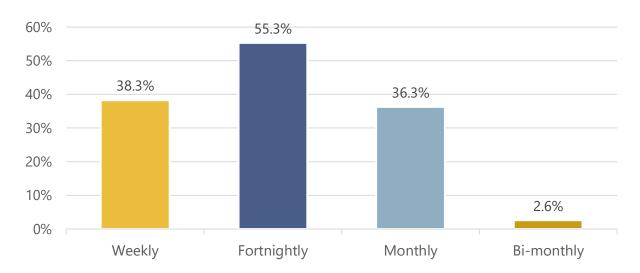
Fortnightly pay cycles are preferred by Australian organisations. More than two thirds of the employees represented by responding organisations are paid fortnightly.

Employee population by pay cycle



Payment cycles by organisation



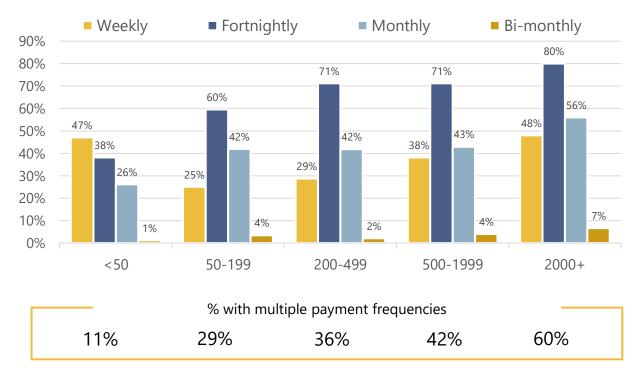


While 68% of employees are paid fortnightly, only 55% of surveyed organisations said that they have employees on fortnightly pay cycles. Fortnightly pay cycles are more common in organisations with more than 200 employees.

Larger organisations are also more likely to have multiple payment frequencies for their employees.

In organisations with fewer than 50 employees the most common pay cycle is weekly.

Payment cycles by organisation – based on number of employees





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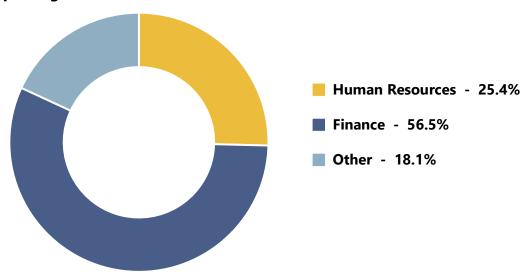


Payroll reporting lines

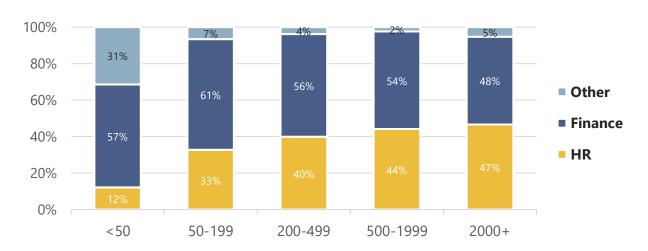
A majority of respondents (56.5%) indicated that in their organisation payroll reports to Finance. Payroll reports to Human Resources in one quarter (25.4%) of surveyed businesses.

Respondents who indicated that payroll reports to an 'other' business area frequently specified that payroll is reported directly to executive management, including a Director, CEO, General Manager, or business owner. Other departmental reporting lines include Administration and Accounts.

Payroll reporting lines



Payroll reporting lines – based on number of employees



Small businesses are significantly more likely to have payroll reporting to neither HR or Finance, as they often do not have these departments. Many are either sole traders, or have payroll reporting directly to the business owner.



Average payroll salaries

This table shows the average salary of Australian payroll professionals, including superannuation and bonus if applicable.

Average salary by job role - national

Role	Average salary	
Group Payroll Manager	\$ 141,844	
Payroll Manager	\$ 112,754	
Team Leader	\$ 100,774	
Senior Payroll Officer	\$ 90,436	
Payroll Officer	\$ 72,587	

Average salary by job role – by state

			Roles		
	Group Payroll Manager	Payroll Manager	Team Leader	Senior Payroll Officer	Payroll Officer
NSW	\$151,789	\$117,558	\$110,224	\$94,548	\$69,035
QLD	\$133,547	\$109,178	\$87,522	\$83,780	\$72,580
SA	\$115,763	\$108,719	-	\$81,546	\$71,994
VIC	\$147,380	\$106,538	\$106,364	\$91,861	\$69,136
WA	-	\$123,448	\$101,805	\$94,760	\$75,602
ACT/NT/TAS	-	\$119,263	-	-	\$85,768

- Insufficient responses

Payroll staff turnover

The average staff turnover in payroll roles nationally over the past year was 17.11%. Turnover tends to be higher in organisations with more than one payroll staff member (19.63%), compared to organisations with one (16.96%) or less than one (13.87%) payroll FTEs.



Average cost per payslip

The average cost per payslip takes into account the total payroll-related costs of responding organisations, and the number of payslips produced annually, which is determined by number of staff and payment frequency.

Included in the total payroll-related costs are:

Salary costs

Payroll staff salaries and wages including superannuation, and bonuses if relevant

Technical costs

Payroll, time and attendance, and employee self service software and services costs

Other costs

- Payroll consulting fees
- Payroll recruitment fees
- Payroll training costs (including conferences and travel)
- Payroll temporary staff costs

Nationally, the average cost per payslip is \$125.79, however this varies significantly based on factors such as organisational size, location and industry

Average payslip cost - by number of employees

Number of employees	Average cost per payslip
<50	\$281.53
50-199	\$50.41
200-499	\$22.71
500-1999	\$12.88
2000+	\$7.55

Average payslip cost - by payroll reporting line

	Reporting lines			
HR	HR	Finance	Other	
<50	\$226.13	\$327.10	\$214.69	
50-199	\$47.24	\$52.99	\$39.60	
200-499	\$23.07	\$23.14	-	
500-1999	\$13.95	\$12.10	-	
2000+	\$7.53	\$7.40	-	

- Insufficient responses



Average cost per payslip- by industry

	Number of employees				
	<50	50-199	200-499	500-1999	2000+
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	\$140.98	\$57.04	\$22.17	\$5.85	\$8.59
Arts and Recreation	\$174.84	\$161.51	-	\$5.58	-
Construction	\$255.04	\$63.18	\$24.77	\$12.33	\$11.09
Education and Training	\$131.14	\$45.01	\$18.81	\$14.76	\$5.29
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	\$83.59	\$75.98	-	\$14.27	\$4.61
Finance and Insurance	\$700.33	\$53.22	\$20.39	\$18.63	\$5.54
Government - Commonwealth	\$650.36	-	-	\$16.26	-
Government - Local	\$46.79	\$34.44	\$12.07	\$10.96	\$7.13
Government - State	-	\$77.54	-	\$14.98	\$10.22
Healthcare	\$285.22	\$57.42	\$27.88	\$11.38	\$8.43
Hospitality	\$87.06	\$28.29	\$10.38	\$9.57	\$4.11
Information Media and Telecommunications	\$475.82	\$61.69	\$64.59	\$9.50	\$10.60
Manufacturing	\$204.82	\$31.49	\$16.49	\$12.99	\$9.16
Mining	-	\$51.87	\$19.23	\$12.03	\$13.04
Not for profit	\$214.61	\$33.91	\$20.78	\$14.46	-
Personal Services	\$282.63	\$51.66	-	-	-
Professional and Business Services	\$231.81	\$86.37	\$32.00	\$15.70	\$9.32
Retail trade	\$274.87	\$37.61	\$19.03	\$11.14	\$6.17
Transportation and Logistics	\$222.78	\$31.51	\$24.12	\$7.38	\$5.30
Wholesale Trade	\$476.64	\$45.15	\$35.66	\$17.72	-

- Insufficient responses



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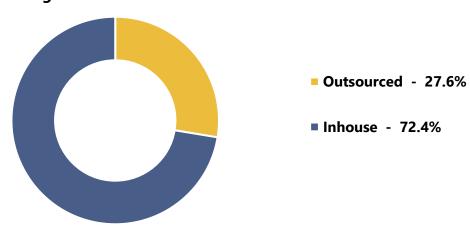


Outsourced vs inhouse payroll

While the vast majority of surveyed organisations run inhouse payroll, 27.6% are outsourcing payroll to external providers.

Outsourcing payroll is more common in organisations with fewer than 200 employees, while larger businesses are more likely to have a dedicated inhouse payroll function. Since the last Payroll Benchmarking Report in 2019 we have seen a considerable decline in payroll outsourcing by medium to large businesses.

Payroll outsourcing



Outsourced vs inhouse payroll – by number of employees

	Number of employees				
	<50	50-199	200-499	500-1999	2000+
Outsourced	34.4%	33.5%	19.8%	14.6%	15.2%
Inhouse	65.6%	66.5%	80.2%	85.4%	84.8%

Outsourced vs inhouse payroll - average cost of payslip

	Number of employees				
	<50 50-199 200-499 500-1999 200				
Outsourced	\$269.85	\$54.97	\$29.32	\$15.93	\$10.91
Inhouse	\$280.17	\$48.21	\$20.99	\$13.09	\$7.27

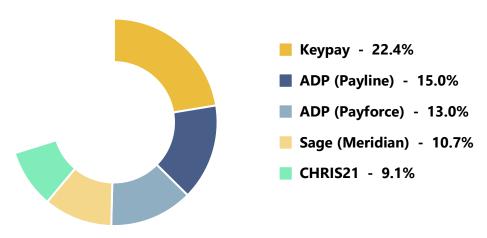
We recommend payroll outsource providers ensure their teams are qualified to a minimum standards of Certificate IV in Payroll Administration (www.payroll.edu.au)



Payroll technology market share

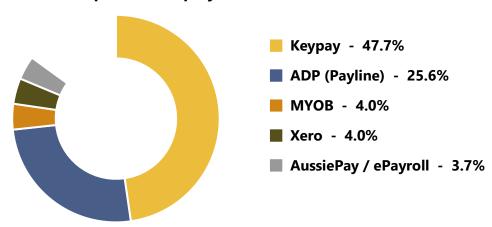
Survey respondents were asked which payroll system they use. They were able to select from a list of 45 payroll products, or select 'other' and write in the name of their payroll system if it did not appear on the list.

Payroll top 5: Total market share across all organisations



The top five payroll products represent 70.2% of total market share.

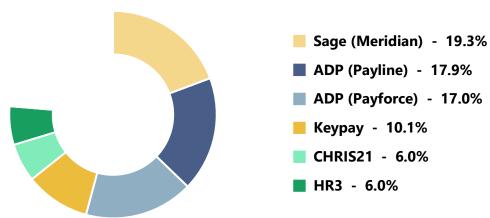
Payroll market share top 5: <50 employees



The top five payroll products represent an 85.0% share in organisations with fewer than 50 employees.

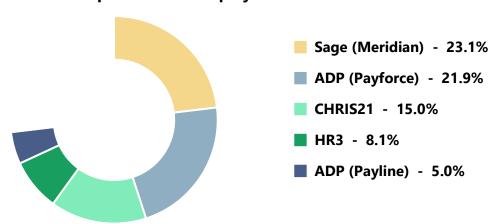
Payroll market share top 5: 50-199 employees





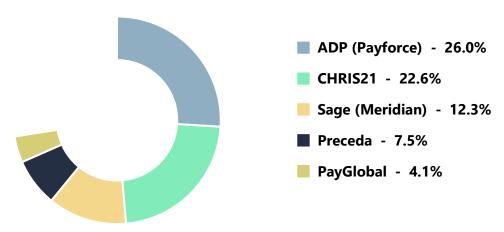
The top six payroll products represent 76.3% share of organisations with 50-199 employees.

Payroll market share top 5: 200-499 employees



The top five payroll products represent 73.1% share of organisations with 200-499 employees.

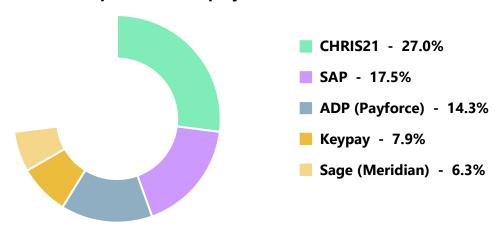
Payroll market share top 5: 500-1999 employees



The top five payroll products represent 72.5% share of organisations with 500-1999 employees.



Payroll market share top 5: 2000+ employees



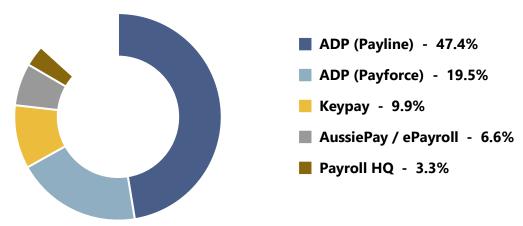
The top five payroll products represent 73.0% share of organisations with 2000+ employees.

Outsourcing market share

ADP Payline is the leading outsourcing payroll product, used by close to half of all surveyed organisations with outsourced payroll functions.

Overall, the top five outsourcing payroll products represent 86.7% share in this category.

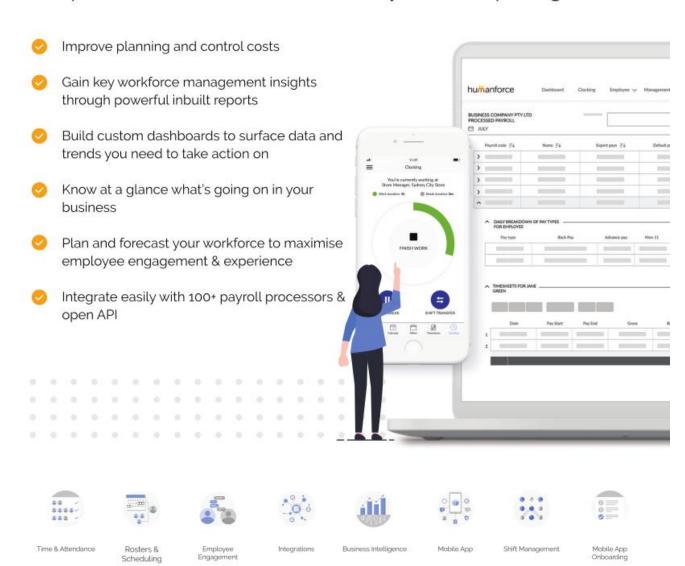
Payroll market share top 5: Outsourced payroll





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Top 3 payroll vendors by industry

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing			
1	Keypay	33.3%	
2	ADP (Payforce)	18.5%	
2	ADP (Payline)	18.5%	

Construction			
1	Keypay	40.3%	
2	ADP (Payline)	11.1%	
3	Sage (Meridian)	8.3%	

	Education and Training	
1	ADP (Payline)	28.6%
2	Keypay	12.5%
2	Sage (Meridian)	12.5%

	Finance and Insurance	
1	ADP (Payline)	18.3%
2	Keypay	16.9%
2	ADP (Payforce)	16.9%

	Healthcare	
1	CHRIS21	22.2%
2	ADP (Payline)	16.7%
2	Keypay	16.7%

Hospitality			
1	Keypay	38.5%	
2	ADP (Payforce)	12.8%	
3	CHRIS21 / Sage (Meridian)	10.3% ea	

Information, Media & Telco			
1	Keypay	23.7%	
2	ADP (Payline)	23.7%	
3	ADP (Payforce)	18.4%	

Manufacturing			
1	Sage (Meridian)	20.6%	
2	ADP (Payforce)	19.6%	
3	ADP (Payline)	13.1%	

Not for profit			
1	Sage (Meridian)	17.5%	
2	Keypay	14.4%	
3	CHRIS21	13.4%	

Professional and Business Services			
1	Keypay	30.8%	
2	ADP (Payline)	17.7%	
3	ADP (Payforce)	9.2%	

Retail trade			
1	Keypay	30.7%	
2	ADP (Payforce)	16.0%	
3	ADP (Payline)	10.7%	

	Transportation and Logistics			
1	ADP (Payforce)	21.4%		
1	ADP (Payline)	21.4%		
3	Keypay	16.7%		

Wholesale Trade				
1	ADP (Payline)	25.0%		
2	Keypay / Sage (Meridian)	11.4% ea		
2	HR3 / AussiePay/ePayroll	11.4% ea		

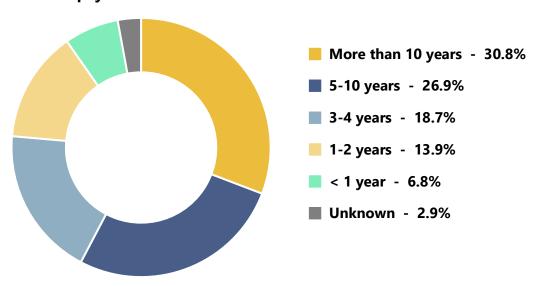


Time with current payroll vendor

Responses suggest that organisations rarely switch payroll software platforms, with 57.7% indicating that their organisation has been with their current vendor for more than five years, and 30.8% for more than ten years.

In particular, large businesses tend to have long term relationships with their payroll vendors.

Time with current payroll vendor



Time with current payroll vendor – by number of employees

	Number of employees				
	<50	50-199	200-499	500-1999	2000+
More than 10 years	18.6%	26.5%	39.4%	48.0%	62.1%
5-10 years	22.5%	30.9%	32.1%	31.8%	16.7%
3-4 years	26.4%	16.6%	13.3%	10.8%	7.6%
1-2 years	19.8%	14.3%	9.7%	6.1%	4.5%
Less than a year	8.8%	8.1%	4.8%	2.7%	4.5%
Unknown	3.9%	3.6%	0.6%	0.7%	4.5%

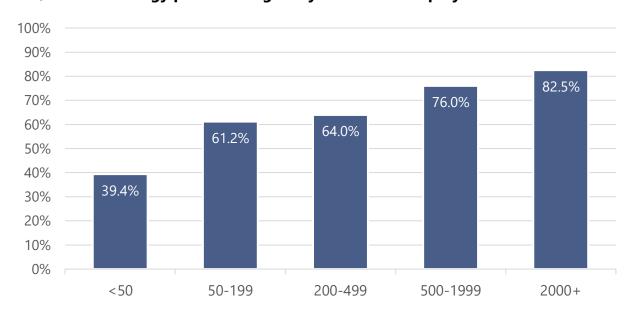


ESS/MSS Technology

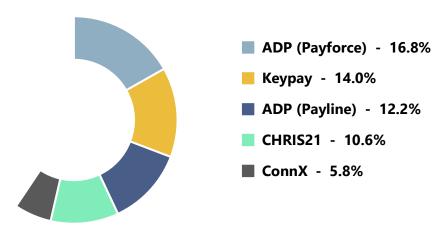
Respondents were asked to indicate which ESS/MSS technology product they use.

On average, only 57% of organisations use ESS/MSS technology, with usage increasing based on the size of the organisation.

ESS/MSS technology product usage – by number of employees



ESS/MSS top 5: Market share



Market share figures are based on share those using ESS/MSS technology, not total sample. The top five ESS/MSS technology products represent a 59.4% share of the market.

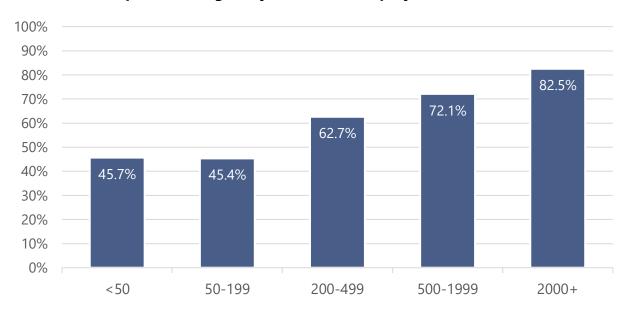


Time & attendance / award technology

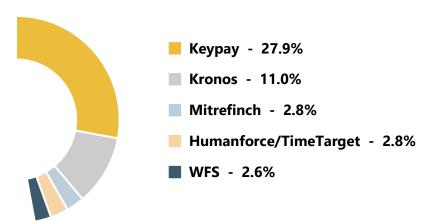
Respondents were also asked to indicate which time and attendance or award interpretation technology they are using.

Only 55% of organisations are using a technology platform for this purpose, however usage is significantly more common in larger organisations.

Time & award product usage – by number of employees



Time & award top 5: Market share



Market share figures are based on those using this type of technology product only. The top five time and attendance or award technology products represent a 47.1% share of the market.

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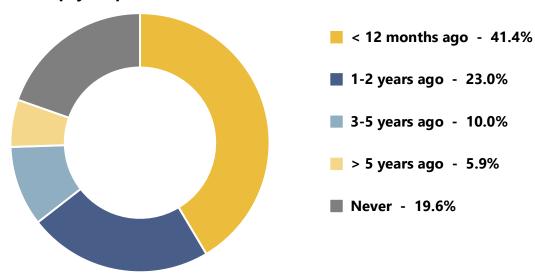
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Payroll process reviews

A majority of organisations have undergone a payroll operation process review within the past two years (64.4%), although small businesses are less likely to review their operations regularly, if at all.

Recency of last payroll process review



Recency of last payroll process review - by number of employees

	Number of employees				
	<50	50-199	200-499	500-1999	2000+
< 12 months ago	29.8%	46.9%	49.0%	51.1%	52.5%
1-2 years ago	17.1%	27.5%	26.1%	22.6%	36.1%
3-5 years ago	10.2%	10.1%	9.2%	12.8%	4.9%
> 5 years ago	4.7%	6.8%	7.8%	6.0%	4.9%
Never	38.1%	8.7%	7.8%	7.5%	1.6%

Across all organisations, 62.4% of those who have undergone payroll process reviews conducted the most recent review internally rather than engaging an external review process.



Size of payroll team

Size of the payroll team - by number of employees

Number of employees	Payroll team FTEs
<50	0.95
50-199	1.19
200-499	1.43
500-1999	2.87
2000+	12.26

Average accuracy rate

The average payroll accuracy rate is 98.90%, with 1.10% error rate.

Trained payroll backup

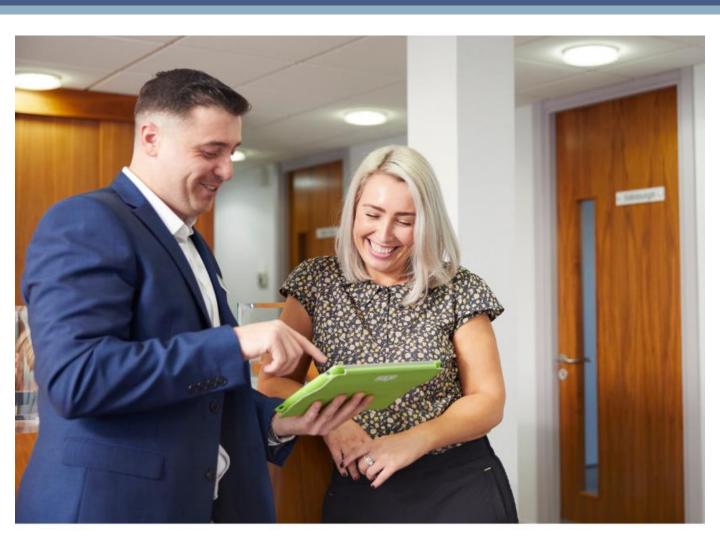
Only 55.6% of respondents indicated their organisation has a fully trained payroll backup who can process payroll in the event of unexpected absenteeism in the payroll team.

Trained payroll backup



% of organisations with trained payroll backup - by number of employees

Number of employees	% with payroll backup
<50	41.6%
50-199	70.2%
200-499	53.3%
500-1999	67.3%
2000+	77.0%



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Payroll training

External payroll training days may include classroom training, bespoke internal training, online training, end of year training, and payroll conferences.

On average, respondents completed 2.1 days of external payroll training in the past twelve months. This average is higher in large organisations, particularly those with 2000 or more employees.

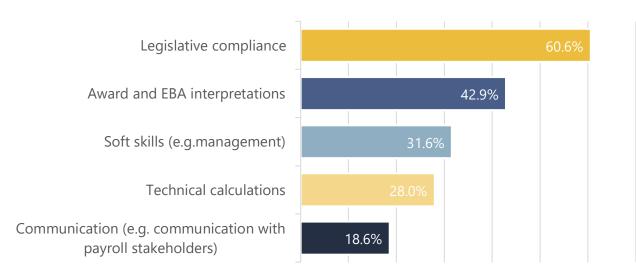
Average days of training per annum- by number of employees

Number of employees	Average per person
<50	1.1
50-199	2.1
200-499	2.5
500-1999	2.5
2000+	4.9

Training needs

A majority of surveyed payroll professionals would like to develop their legislative compliance skills over the next twelve months (60.6%). Award and EBA interpretation is another area where respondents indicated that they would benefit from training.

Skills payroll professionals want to develop over the next 12 months



To learn more about payroll education and training programs, please visit Australian Payroll Institute at www.payroll.edu.au or Australian Payroll Association at www.austpayroll.edu.au or www.austpayroll.edu.au or www.austpayroll.edu.au or www.austpayrol



Payroll qualifications

The vast majority of payroll professionals do not hold a payroll specific qualification such as a Certificate IV in Payroll Administration or a Diploma of Payroll Management. However, encouragingly the proportion who are qualified is increasing.

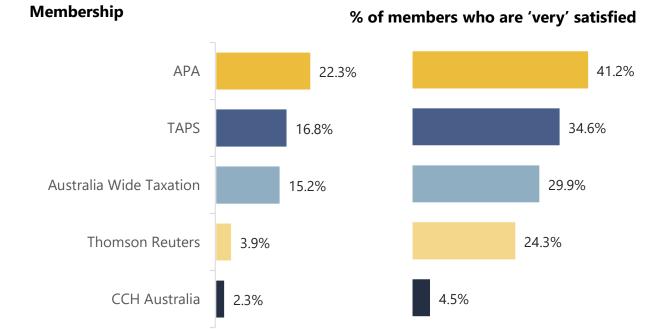
11.9% of surveyed payroll professionals hold a competency based qualification, up from 10.1% in 2019, and 6.2% in 2017.

For more details about these qualifications, please visit Australian Payroll Institute at www.payroll.edu.au

Payroll support organisations

Australian Payroll Association is the leading payroll support organisation, with higher market share and satisfaction levels compared with other support organisations

57% of respondents do not hold membership of any payroll support organisations.



To join APA, please visit www.austpayroll.com.au/membership



Payroll challenges

Respondents were asked to indicate the top three challenges for their payroll function over the past 12 months, and top three anticipated challenges over the next 12 months.

Technology upgrades and award interpretation feature heavily amongst the most important challenges faced by payroll teams.

The high proportion of respondents mentioning 'other' challenges over the past year reflects challenges brought about by COVID and Jobkeeper.

Challenges for payroll function in past 12, and next 12, months





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Where to from here?

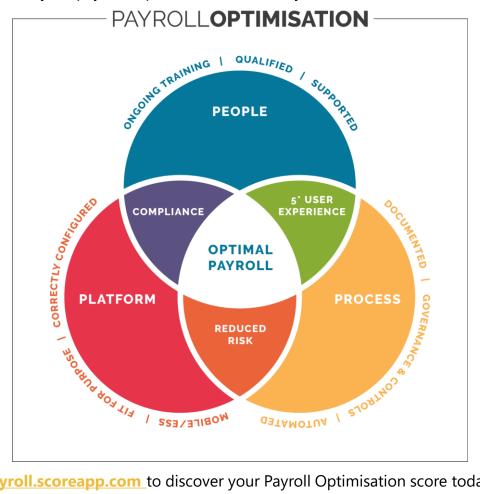
Payroll benchmarking is a balancing act between the need for governance and compliance in the payroll function versus the cost of delivery. It's only at the intersection of compliance and efficiency that organisations can rest easy that they have a highly valued payroll operation that is providing tangible value to their organisation.

There are only three things that cause payroll problems. It's only when you have all three areas working together as best practice that you can find that payroll intersection.

The three problem areas are People, Processes and Platform. If two or more of these areas are substandard, you can have any combination of problems in your payroll that typically puts an organisation at financial, governance and compliance risk.

As a new offering in 2021, Australian Payroll Association has developed the first of its kind Payroll Optimisation Scorecard. Specifically designed and utilised by our expert payroll consultants. Split into 5 key sections, using 33 questions and an algorithm our unique scorecard produces a report focusing on; People, Process, Platform, Compliance and Customer Service.

Your report (which will be emailed) is easy to digest with recommendations that are actionable in your payroll department immediately.



Visit <u>payroll.scoreapp.com</u> to discover your Payroll Optimisation score today.

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How can Australian Payroll Association help you?

Our goal is to support Australian businesses to ensure compliance and efficiency in the payroll operation. We believe that payroll can offer tangible value if delivered correctly.

Australian Payroll Association specialises in:

Comprehensive payroll support and advice - Our members have access to our payroll helpline as well as our online portal of payroll best practice guides and resources.

Specialist payroll consulting - We can provide advisory services and recommendations for all payroll challenges. We regularly complete Payroll Process Audits and Payroll Compliance Audits for some of Australia's largest employers, saving them millions of dollars per annum by improving the quality and efficiency of their payroll operations. We also work with organisations to evaluate and select payroll technology to ensure you get the best fit for your requirements.

Specialist payroll recruitment - When you can't find the right people for your payroll team, we can assist by leveraging our contacts to find you someone who fits. We never advertise, so exercise complete discretion in our recruitment processes.

Nationally Accredited payroll qualifications - The Certificate IV in Payroll Administration and Diploma of Payroll Management are the industry standard in payroll education. They are the only payroll qualifications on the Australian Qualifications Framework, can be started at any time and are delivered via an online learning portal.

Practical payroll training - Whether online, onsite or in a classroom, Australian Payroll Association provides payroll training from Fundamentals to Masterclass. We often deliver bespoke payroll training based on your industry, organisation and knowledge gaps.

Payroll knowledge assessments - Want to understand your current payroll capability? Our online payroll knowledge test will discover where the training needs in your team are.

Payroll events - Our annual conference is the largest payroll event in Australia and provides for both strategic and technical payroll topics. This year we have yet to release a date and location so be sure to check your emails for the announcement.

For more details or to sign up for our free weekly payroll newsletter, please visit www.austpayroll.com.au/newsletter-sign-up/



About Australian Payroll Association

Australian Payroll Association (APA) provides membership advisory services, education and specialist recruitment and consulting services for Australian employers.

Please contact the following people for further information on any of our services:

Membership, Qualifications, online and onsite learning	Payroll recruitment and knowledge assessment	Benchmarking report, payroll consulting, industry partnerships and media
APA Team info@austpayroll.com.au 02 9181 1931	Andy Thompson Recruitment Director andy@austpayroll.com.au 02 9181 1931	Tracy Angwin CEO tracy@austpayroll.com.au 02 9181 1931
www.austpayroll.com.au		

Client testimonials

If you're serious about payroll, you need to be a member of APA. With ongoing legislation changes, we need to keep updated regularly to ensure we are compliant. APA - not only supports this but has a range of other services benefiting payroll. Thanks Tracy - also thoroughly enjoyed the recent 'Payroll Leadership Academy'.

Renee Churches, Weir Minerals Australia

What an amazing resource the APA is for the Payroll Industry. From Qualifications to Training to Webinars and Bulletins, they cover all aspects that ensure you run a compliant payroll. Tracy and Team you are absolutely amazing and run an amazing organisation.

Melissa Adams, Coates Hire Operations

Accurate and timely information imparted in a completely no nonsense manner.

Even complex matters are presented so that all can be understood with practical details that assist easy implementation.

Michelle Southam, Legend Corporate Services

I have been a member of The Australian Payroll
Association for a few years now. Membership is a
must for any payroll professional who seeks to
ensure compliance and help grow our profession.
Training is always on point with friendly and
talented speakers who know their subject and
provide information in easy to digest formats. The
Annual Conference is fun and informative. I've
been able to network with practitioners who share
a love of what we do and continually search for
best practice. A big thumbs up from me!

Claire Story, The Knox School

Australian Payroll Association wishes to acknowledge and thank all payroll professionals and employers that participated in this important industry research.



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